

NSC BRIEFING

30 October 1960

CLASSIFIED BY: TS S C
REVIEW DATE: _____
AUTH: HQ 70-2
DATE: 13/80 REVIEWER: 372044
VENEZUELA

- I. Anti-government disturbances which broke out on 19 October in Venezuela have placed a severe strain on President Betancourt's coalition and are causing serious political tension. The disturbances were masterminded by pro-Castro elements and Communists.
- A. Several deaths and injuries have resulted from demonstrations, largely by students.
 - B. The incidents are largely concentrated in Caracas, where relative calm has been restored, but have also occurred in several provincial cities.
 - C. The violence was touched off by the arrest of leftist leaders responsible for a subversive article calling on the "popular masses" to oust Betancourt.
 - D. The government has arrested an estimated 500 persons and claims to have evidence of a well-organized plot designed to overthrow Betancourt.
 - E. The disturbances could lead Betancourt to break with the Castro regime if proof is uncovered that Cuba supported the violence campaign.
- II. In addition to the Communists and their leftist allies, dissident elements of one faction of Betancourt's three-party coalition are also involved in the unrest.
- A. This faction may be considering withdrawal from the coalition and overtly joining the leftist-Communist opposition with which it has co-operated to a large degree in recent weeks.

~~SECRET~~

Approved For Release 2000/08/29 : CIA-RDP79R00890A001300010027-3

B. Betancourt, ^{is} sharply criticizing this ^{faction} member of his coalition for its attitude during the unrest, ^{and} is apparently attempting to pin the ~~faction~~ ^{on it} with responsibility for a break-up of the present coalition.

III. Betancourt is believed to have the backing of most of the armed forces, now on full alert status to reinforce the police and national guard, and is taking extensive security precautions.

A. Both the military and moderate groups apparently favor strong measures to quell the violence, and pro-government groups are rallying to support Betancourt.

Check WH
and IWSG

Approved For Release 2000/08/29 : CIA-RDP79R00890A001300010027-3

~~SECRET~~